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forms, an apparent confusion of forms even, means either the indefiniteness of the forms themselves, or the impossibility of tracing the pedigree of those that finally prevail through a clear line of descent to the primitive forms in which the growth began. That is the narrowing fallacy of those who refuse to allow to legal forms their proper place in the complex evolution that produced feudalism.

In the matter of the evidence brought forward, this volume differs somewhat from the other two. A marked feature of both the others was the frequent citation in full of passages from the sources, especially of unpublished ones, to such an extent as to make them almost source-books of early feudalism. The argument of Volume I. was supported mainly by evidence from the charters. In Volume II. appeared an array of evidence from a new source, the *chansons de geste*, open to obvious critical objections, but handled by the author with care and skill. Volume III. brings into the field still a new array, drawn now from the saints' lives and from sermons, open to the same objections, but handled with the same care. The volume differs, however, from the first two in the amount of quotation, which is quite distinctly less.

In conclusion it is to be said that while M. Flach's work is a most suggestive and valuable contribution to the history of early feudalism, it cannot be accepted as a safe guide for the beginner. It is a book for the special student, for one who already knows the evidence and the prevailing interpretation of it, and who can estimate critically the author's use of it and his new conclusions. The special distinction of the book is that those who know the most about its subject, and perhaps those who least accept its peculiar views, will gain the most from it.

GEORGE B. ADAMS.

Mediæval England: English Feudal Society from the Norman Conquest to the Middle of the Fourteenth Century. By MARY BATESON, Associate and Lecturer of Newnham College, Cambridge. [The Story of the Nations.] (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904. Pp. xxvii, 448.)

As might be expected from a writer whose editing of *The Records of the Borough of Leicester* has given her a conspicuous place in early municipal history, Miss Bateson's *Mediæval England* is distinctly above the level of the long series of which the new volume forms a part. Much more new material, the result of painstaking research in a field not hitherto overworked, has gone into this volume than into some of its predecessors in the "Story of the Nations" series. The work, while characterized by directness and clearness of narrative which cannot fail to make it readable, bears the mark of scholarship. There was a place for a book of moderate size with the aims and on the lines of Miss Bateson's work. There was a constituency of general readers awaiting it; and Miss Bateson has adequately occupied the field.

National politics comes in for little attention. There is but a passing allusion to the beginnings of the House of Commons ; and this only in relation to taxation in the municipalities. The main lines of political movement are assumed to be understood. Miss Bateson's aim has been to keep social rather than political conditions in view ; but there is in the volume much concerning the beginnings of town life, and the marked progress of municipal institutions in the last fifty or seventy years of the middle ages. The exact period covered by Miss Bateson's study is from 1066 to 1350 ; and her attitude toward the subject is shown by her subdivisions. These are : Norman Feudalism, from 1066 to 1154 ; The Lawyers' Feudalism, from 1154 to 1250 ; and Decadent Feudalism, from 1250 to 1350. Excluding national politics, there is not a phase of English life in these three centuries which is not freshly illuminated in Miss Bateson's pages. The social side is predominant throughout—the life of the court, of the baronial hall and the manor-house, of the villain and the freeman, and of the abbey.

As is natural in a book written by a woman, particular attention is given to the life of women, to their daily routine, their social duties, and their pleasures, and to their accomplishments in art and literature. The material for this in the earlier part of the period is, as Miss Bateson explains, only scant. But it has been unearthed wherever it was discoverable ; and Miss Bateson's treatment of this part of her subject gives the feeling that nearly all has been said that it is yet possible to learn of women's lives and interests between the Norman invasion and the gradual partial breakdown of the feudal system.

Miss Bateson has taken a comprehensive view of social England. In her four hundred pages she has covered the beginnings of the civil service ; the organization and internal economy of the church ; the conditions under which lawyers began to be a class apart ; the beginnings of the universities ; the condition of popular education ; and the changes in the economy of agriculture. She also covers the beginnings and developments in municipal institutions, and of trade and social guilds. As regards these, most attention is given to the municipal institutions and guilds of London. These were the models for similar institutions in the provincial cities and boroughs ; and as Miss Bateson shows, they were rightly taken as models ; for by the end of the period London, with a population of at least 90,000, was divided into twenty-four wards ; its gates were well armed ; its municipal council was well organized and active ; it had its own law-courts ; and in a word, in everything municipal London by 1350 was half a century in advance of the best-organized municipality in the provinces.

It is noteworthy that even at this early period local government was carried on, as at the present time, by men who received no pay.

Only the actual out-of-pocket expenses of authorized officials were defrayed by the common chest, and there might often be a difficulty in obtaining even these. The Mayor of London received a large grant for the maintenance of hospitality, £40, but in small towns 20 s. sufficed.

A town-clerk and town-sergeant received small salaries, but the list of paid officials is always very short (p. 397).

In municipal service, in relation to the church and also to rural economy, customs and characteristics that are found in English life to-day had all come into existence by 1350. Some of them were already well-established. It is this fact which makes Miss Bateson's book of interest and permanent value. It is a book which should specially commend itself to educated Americans who are contemplating a sojourn in England. A study of it will help to the understanding, not only of the building of the cathedrals and abbeys and castles, and of their place in medieval life, but also to a comprehension of the present-day organization of the cathedral staffs, as well as of municipal conditions and some phases of modern rural economy.

There is a chronological table of twenty pages, beginning with the crowning of William the Conqueror and ending with the Black Death of 1349. Illustrations are numerous, but most of them have no close relation with the text.

EDWARD PORRITT.

The Oligarchy of Venice: an Essay. By GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. 1904. Pp. iv, 216.)

MAYOR MCCLELLAN's purpose is to trace the origin, growth, and ascendancy of the oligarchy at Venice, and to show that, from the moment the oligarchs got control, the republic inevitably decayed. He has no difficulty in accomplishing this to his own satisfaction and to the conviction of any reader who supposes that because a demonstration is simple it is necessarily true. Most of the glittering generalities with which histories of a certain kind are now filled out owe their semblance of truth to the careful omission of inconvenient details. But in the story of Venice one must not make the oligarchy the scapegoat of all her ills unless he is prepared in justice to show how essentially it contributed to her prosperity.

One would scarcely realize from Mr. McClellan's pages that after the oligarchy was completely organized, Venice did anything but go to pieces. Yet for her to make head at all against the League of Cambray, and to recover her strength so far that she was still formidable for two centuries, was the best proof that the oligarchy was not palsied. To save herself from the Spanish plots, at the time when Spain stood paramount in Europe, certainly does not argue feebleness. Historians are accustomed to sing the praises of sturdy Elizabethan England and of brave little Holland for successfully resisting Philip II.; Venice deserves scarcely less credit for circumventing his successors, but Mr. McClellan fails to give her credit for the service she then rendered. Even less does he indicate her epoch-making resistance to the interdict in 1606, when, under the counsel of Sarpi, she drew the sting of ecclesiastical interference in political affairs. And surely the immense burden which the oligarchy bore during the seventeenth century in its combat with the Turk ought not to be ignored.